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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS
IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL
AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Written statement submitted by Pax Christi International, a
non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement,
which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council
resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[8 April 1997]

The human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran

1. 1996 was one of the worst years as far as human rights abuses in Iran were concerned. The adoption of new laws gave suppression legal justification. The United Nations Special Representative's February 1997 report noted that public executions had doubled relative to the previous year. Most political executions have been carried out in secret and many dissidents were arrested and executed under the pretext of non-political offences or "disloyalty to Islam and the State". The Interior Minister acknowledged that in the last three months of the Iranian year (December 1996 through February 1997) 730 people were arrested on drug-trafficking charges every day. Many of these detainees were political activists

2. Women are denied their most rudimentary rights. More women are joining the Resistance against the Iranian regime every day. After 15 years of struggle against the misogynous regime in Iran, these pioneering women occupy key positions as leaders of the Resistance movement. The role of women in the democratic opposition of Iran, and the fact that this movement is led by a Muslim woman, cause the most serious challenge to the phenomenon of fundamentalism.

3. Religious minorities are suppressed. Several members of Sunni and Christian minorities have reportedly been murdered in the past year, while the Bahai's continue to be suppressed.

4. The Special Representative in his February report to the Commission stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran did not invite him to visit Iran because of the resolution approved by the Commission at its fifty-second session expressing concern over the continued violation of human rights in Iran. This is a clear attempt to blackmail the international community to keep silent over the human rights situation in Iran.

5. Despite an unprecedented crackdown and hundreds of suppressive military manoeuvres in the past months, public opposition against the regime has spread. Credible international media report a considerable influx of youth joining the democratic opposition's National Liberation Army of Iran. The young generation joining the resistance has sounded the alarm bells for the regime. To counter this phenomenon and to thwart popular uprisings, the Iranian regime has resorted to greater crackdown. During the Kermanshah demonstrations at least 50 were killed and more than 1,000 were arrested. The protests, however, are continuing throughout the country.

6. Seven years have passed since the cowardly assassination of Professor Kazem Rajavi, the representative of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, on 24 April 1990 in Coppet by terrorists dispatched from Tehran. The Swiss investigating magistrate, Judge Roland Chatelain, concluded that 13 members of the Iranian official services who carried diplomatic passports were directly involved in the murder.

7. In 1996, 32 Iranian dissidents were assassinated abroad, an unprecedented 300 per cent increase compared with the previous year. Judicial investigations into the assassination in Turkey of Mrs. Zahra Rajabi, a senior member of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, confirmed that a deputy consul in the Iranian consulate in Istanbul commanded the hit-squad. The regime's senior officials have actively pursued the murder of dissidents in and outside Iran.

8. According to the report: "Iran: State of Terror" published by the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group, "In 1996, artillery became part of the Iranian Government's arsenal of terrorist weaponry in the assassination plot against Maryam Rajavi, the President-elect of the Iranian Resistance." The weapons were discovered at the Belgian port of Antwerp. In January 1997, three of the same weapons were simultaneously fired at the office of the mujahedin opposition in the middle of Baghdad. Several innocent people were killed or wounded. Such policies pose great danger to peace and stability in the sensitive Middle East region.

9. Iran's rulers are continuing their active opposition to the Middle East peace process and the export of fundamentalism abroad. Their endeavours to obtain nuclear weapons is a source of deep concern for the international community. After a 3½-year trial, the indictment by Germany's Federal Prosecutor has implicated the Iranian regime, on the basis of a mass of irrefutable evidence, with State-sponsored terrorism. It identified the Tehran regime's leaders, Ali Khamanei and Hashemi Rafsanjani, as the main

principals behind the assassination of Iranian dissidents in Berlin. For years, State-sponsored terrorism has been one of the Iranian regime's main foreign policy instruments by way of support for terrorist groups and incitement to murder foreign nationals such as Salman Rushdie.

10. These developments, especially the proceedings in Germany's Federal Court, clearly reflect the need to reconsider the case of Professor Rajavi's murder. It is only appropriate that the Swiss Confederation and judicial system undertake the necessary measures vis-à-vis the Iranian Government's refusal to extradite two of the killers who were regrettably returned to Iran by the French Government.

11. We believe that the current session of the Commission on Human Rights must take note of the threefold rise in executions in Iran in 1996 and also the alarming increase in extraterritorial killings. It must strongly condemn the flagrant and systematic violations of human rights in Iran and continue to monitor the situation of human rights in Iran until it secures the necessary and practical guarantees that human rights in Iran are respected, something which shows no signs of happening at present.

12. In backing the declaration by 1,750 parliamentarians in Europe and North America in 1995, we believe that the adoption of a decisive policy including an economic and diplomatic boycott of the Iranian regime, is imperative. Moreover, support for Maryam Rajavi, the President-elect of the National Council of Resistance, who, as a symbol of unity, is backed by the majority of the Iranian people, will contribute to the establishment of democracy in Iran and peace and stability in the region. This resistance and its 580-member parliament, which has committed itself to holding free elections and the creation of a secular and pluralist Government, is the best answer to the ominous spectre of fundamentalism as the new global threat.

13. These undeniable facts demonstrate that the policy of appeasement vis-à-vis the Iranian regime has backfired. "Critical dialogue" has failed and its continuation only invites the mullahs to persist in suppression and the export of terrorism. Today, therefore, there is growing opposition in Europe to the continuation of critical dialogue.
